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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine how parents and family relationships are characterized in realistic young adult fiction. A random sample of 20 realistic young adult novels was selected from the American Library Association's Best Lists for the years 1987-1991. A content analysis of the novels focused on the following: (1) whether parents were categorized as sympathetic/involved, neutral, or hostile/uninvolved; (2) whether the majority of families were two-parent families or single-parent families; (3) what the major conflicts in the story were; (4) what influence family members have on the protagonist's decisions and problems; (5) whether gender of the protagonist influences family relationships; and (6) whether family relationships evolve and how they are characterized at the end of the book. The major findings were: (1) most of the fictional parents were sympathetic and involved; (2) more two-parent families were used than one-parent families; (3) the largest number of conflicts involved embarrassment because of family members who deviated from the norm and from the breakup of the family due to divorce or death; (4) more females had intrafamily conflicts than males; and (5) most family relationships evolved in a positive way during the course of the book. Frequency tables of teen parent interaction and categories of conflict and a list of the books analyzed in the study are appended. (Contains 16 references.) (Author/KRN)

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FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN REALISTIC YOUNG ADULT Fiction, 1987 TO 1991

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Library Science

by

Cathie Sampson
December 1991

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ABSTRACT

Parental role models and family relationships in young adult literature have been a controversial issue for over two decades. A content analysis on twenty young adult novels was conducted, using a random sample of realistic fiction from the American Library Association's Best Lists for the years 1987-1991.

The purpose of the study was to determine how parents and family relationships were characterized by analyzing the following: (1) Were parents categorized as sympathetic/involved, neutral, or hostile/uninvolved; (2) Were the majority of families two-parent families or single-parent families; (3) What were the major conflicts in the story; (4) What influence do family members have on the protagonist's decisions and problems; (5) Does gender of the protagonist influence family relationships; and (6) Do family relationships evolve and how are relationships characterized at the end of the book.

Major findings were : (1) Most parents were sympathetic and involved. (2) More two-parent families were used than one-parent families. (3) The largest number of conflicts involved embarrassment because of family members who deviated from the norm, and from the break up of the family due to divorce or death. (4) More females had intrafamily conflicts than males. (5) Most family relationships evolved in a positive way during the course of the book.

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FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUNG ADULT NOVELS

Contemporary young adult "new realism" is said to have been born in 1967 with the books, The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton, The Contender by Robert Lipsyte, and Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones by Ann Head.[1] These books and others that followed in the late sixties differed from earlier books in several ways: (a) the protagonist was often from a lower class family in a setting of difficult or harsh circumstances; (b) language in the book was often colloquial with profanity and ungrammatically correct speech; (c) serious problems often ended in tragedy. It was thought that young people should have "realistic" expectations of life, knowing both the bad and good about society.

Family relationships in many of the problem novels of the sixties and seventies were also less than model. A 1973 study analyzed novels published in the sixties and found a prevalence of parents who were "confused, stubborn, self-centered, embittered, and rejecting." Alienation was also a major theme in many of these books.[2] Another study analyzing family relationships in young adult novels of the seventies found families in these books to be dysfunctional.[3]

Donelson and Nilsen explain in their text, Literature for Today's Young Adults that it is a common myth that young adult literature is anti-parent.[4] However, this idea has prevailed because of the number of books characterizing parents as poor role models. The purpose of this research paper is to examine a random sample of young adult

literature from the American Library Association's Best Lists of 1987 to 1991 to answe the following questions:

1. What are the major decisions and problems facing the teen protaganist in each novel and what part do immediate family members play in those decisions and problems?

2. Are there major intrafamily conflicts between parent and protaganist or sibling and protaganist?

3. Are parents characterized as hostile and uninvolved, sympathetic and involved, or neutral?

4. Is the protaganist in a single-parent home or a two-parent home?

5. Does gender of the protagonist influence family relationships?

6. Do family relationships evolve in the novel, and if so how are the family relationships portrayed at the conclusion of the story?

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to (1) literature from the ALA Best Lists; (2) realistic fiction--no other type of fiction will be included: (3) only those novels where the protaganist is between the ages of 13 and 18; (4) only those novels where immediate family relationships are included in the story.

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JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Parents, teachers, and librarians not only need to be aware of the content of young adult literature, but should also be aware of trends. For more than two decades, parental and family relationships in young adult literature have caused many parents and critics to shake their heads and cry "anti-parent!" Some have wondered if this so-called "realistic fiction" was totally unrealistic since so much of it portrayed tragic relationships. This paper seeks to determine to what extent this trend continues in the literature of the last five years.

With a knowledge and understanding of the literature, a young adult librarian can not only be a more effective reader's advisor, but may also be able to suggest specific titles to a teen who is experiencing difficulties in certain areas of his life. For example, with the prevalence of single-parent families in our society today, teens may be able to gain some insights into their own feelings by relating to a character experiencing similar difficulties in a novel.

In addition to evaluating current trends and seeking to develop knowledge of the literature for bibliotherapy purposes, this study looks at the nature of sibling relationships in the twenty young adult novels. Very little research has been conducted on sibling relationships in realistic fiction and this study identifies some data that could perhaps lead to future study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While a young child's social environment generally centers on the home, teens become more involved with friends and look to their peer group for approval. They often prefer the company of friends more than that of their family. Most teens seek independence from parents and welcome opportunities to make their own decisions. A common conflict between parent and teen arises over the issue of independence and how much freedom the teen should be allowed.

Realistic young adult fiction generally reflects a teen's perspective and concern for independence. Mertz and England found the following characteristics to exist in this genre:

1. Adolescent fiction will involve a youthful protagonist, with age being an important factor in determining how the character views and understands the world around him.

2. Adolescent fiction often tells the story from the young protagonist's point of view. This may be done through first person narratives, letters to friends, or diaries.

3. Adolescent fiction contains main characters who are highly independent in thought, action, and conflict resolution. In most young adult novels, the teen often feels a sense of isolation and abandonment and is alone in trying to confront his problems.

4. Adolescent fiction attempts to mirror current societal attitudes and issues. The topics, themes, and characters reflect concerns, and sometimes controversial attitudes in society.[5]

With these four points in mind, the rest of this literature review will list studies which analyze family relationships in

young adult literature, as well as review some of the criticism and defense for lack of positive parental role models and dysfunctional family relationships in young adult novels.

One of the earliest studies on family relationships in children's literature was a study conducted by Alma Homze in 1966. He studied 780 books of the period between 1920 and 1960 and found that parents were often not factors in the stories that centered on children's lives. Homze concluded that these books left an impression that adults were missing or uninterested in children's lives.[6]

In 1973 Selma R. Siege analyzed female protaganists in 14 novels published in the 1960's and found most parents in these novels to be bitter and rejecting of their children.[7] In contrast to Siege's findings, W. Bernard Lukenbill, in 1974, conducted a study of fathers in adolescent literature in the 1960's and found nearly half of the fathers to be "emotional and expressive," and not "remote" in their dealings with their children.[8]

Two important studies were conducted on young adult literature of the 1970's. Lukenbill analyzed 25 novels and rated the families on twelve measures of psychological family health. He found the families to be far from ideal. In fact, the majority were considered unhealthy, particularly on factors of openness of expression, demonstration of affection, and acceptance of one another.[9]

The second study was conducted by Anita Kurth. She analyzed popular novels of the 1970's, selected by teens in ten California schools, as well as books she had recently read, and books from the School Library Journal's best lists between 1968 and 1977. She then

selected a sampling from each list. She divided family interactions into three categories: sympathetic/involved, neutral, and hostile/uninvolved. She also compared interactions by the gender of the protagonist. Her findings were that in 27 of the 42 books analyzed parents were hostile/involved, and male protagonists were more often victims of negative interaction.[10]

CRITICISM OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

All but one study sited thus far in this paper suggests that in a majority of young adult novels, parents have either a negative affect on the protaganist or are absent or uninvolved. Common criticisms of parents in these books are that they are: "ineffectual, inadequate dummies, or antagonistic monsters!" Parents are also abusive alcoholics and/or negligent in their duties.

Joyce Burner analyzed several novels and found those descriptions appropriate for several books of the late 1980's:[11] The protagonist in Up Country (1989) must deal with an alcoholic mother who is eventually arrested for a hit-and-run accident and sent to a treatment center. The teen is then forced to live with relatives he doesn't know. In the novel, Where It Stops, Nobody Knows (1988), Nina and her mother have spent their lives moving from one town to another. Nina finally discovers the reason: she had been kidnapped from the hospital at birth by this woman who she calls mother and they are running from the FBI. In the book, This Stranger, My Father, the father is a convict who sold secrets to the Soviets.

Paul Zindel's parental figures in the novels he writes are "dark figures...stuff of nightmares."[12] Mothers are portrayed as eccentric,

alcoholic, schizophrenic, compulsive, loveless, physically debilitated, prone to stealing, dishonest, and overbearing. The mother tends to be the controlling parent in his novels, and usually the main source of trouble for the offspring. Male figures tend to be laughable fools. Others are distrustful and paranoid.[13]

Family relationships are often sources of trouble for teens in Cynthia Voight's novels.[14] In The Runner, the father is seen as critical and tyrannical. The mother is passive and refuses to go against the father. In one of the sequels to this book, Dicey takes on the responsibility of her sister's children when the sister's health deteriorates with mental illness. Dicey is thirteen years old. She takes the children from her sister's house and walks the 200 miles to her mother's house, only to find an unwelcome reception from her mother. In the novel, Tree by Leaf, the father returns from World War I, disfigured and unable to support the family. The mother wants her teenage daughter to drop out of school and stay home to do the chores formerly done by servants.

All of these negative parental characters have angered both parents and critics. Both groups have criticized young adult books as being demeaning to parents and portraying them as responsible for all the world's injustices.[15] Anita Kurth states,

> "It will be argued, and rightly so, that many of these novels were written precisely in reaction to Dick and Jane-type families of some earlier fiction, that they precisely address an adolescent's need to know that other kids encounter hostility social difficulties, anger, divorce...Taken in large doses they present a world that does not match anyone's ideal; quite possibly it does not match the real world, either. 16

Joyce Burner concluded her study on young adult literature with this statement.

> "Realistic fiction belongs in the YA collection so teens will know they aren't alone in their experiences, but they also need literature that offers a positive model to emulate and reinforces the concept that the family is still alive, functioning, and worth the effort to build and maintain."[17]

Nilsen and Donelson suggest in an article that appeared in School Library Journal in 1988 that there are still plenty of absent or imperfect parents, but they are less likely to be one-sided. There are also parents who support and approve of their children.[18]

DEFENSE OF NEGATIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

To understand why young adult novels so frequently feature negative family relationships, authors' comments themselves might provide some insights. Joan Atkinson, a professor of library science in Alabama, conducted interviews with a number of authors to discuss this issue.[19] She asked each author several questions. The first was whether or not portrayal of the parental characters was influenced by the intended teenage audience. They all said that more important was the use of a teenage protagonist. Richard Peck said his novels often portray young characters in lonely isolation, independently solving their own problems. It would be inappropriate to allow an adult to step in and solve the problem. Zibby O'Neal explained that parents are portrayed as the teen sees them, and they are often seen from a distance as the protagonist works for independence. Todd Strasser said teens appear in his books about as much as they appear

in their children's lives--not a great deal. Peck also stated, "This generation has the lowest profile in their children's lives of any we have yet seen."[20]

As for parents portrayed as poor role models, Harry Mazer stated that an important theme during adolescence is the realization that, "you aren't your parents, you aren't responsible for what your parents are, and you can only change your own life."[21] Richard Peck criticized the perfect parents portrayed on television and suggested that they may be "hazardous to the health of real families...Our books portray adults often as imperfect...Our books aren't that simplistic, nor do they run the danger of making real parents look bad by comparison."[22]

Atkinson concludes her study by suggesting that it is naive to assume all parents should be characterized as "all-wise and all-powerful."[23] It is demeaning to teens to think they enjoy literature simply to see parents dethroned. Finally, it is "anti-parent only for the reader who needs a scapegoat, a simple answer to a complex set of circumstances, or a rose-colored window on the world."[24]

In conclusion, this review has presented the controversy over parental characters in young adult fiction. Critics are concerned that young adult fiction does not provide a balance between healthy and unhealthy family relationships, that it presents an unrealistic view of the world. They are concerned that young adults will be negatively influenced. Those who defend such literature say that the story is told according to the teen's perspective. The teen is seeking for independence and learning to solve his own problems and

because of this, family is less important to the story. The defenders of this literature say that teens reading these books are not negatively affected.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Realistic fiction is defined as fiction that mirrors characters, settings, experiences, and activities of real people. This excludes science fiction, fantasy or mystery.

Young adult literature is defined in this study as that literature which uses a protagonist between the ages of 13 and 18 years old and that will appeal to that same age group.

Family relationships are defined as those relationships and interactions between parents and children or between siblings.

Neutral parents are those parents who have little interaction with children, not because of hostility or lack of concern, but because of lack of relevance of the parent to the story.

Hostile/uninvolved parents are those parents who are constantly critical, antagonistic, or uninterested in their children. These parents are also self-concerned or have self-destructive habits.

Sympathetic/involved parents are those parents who are concerned, supportive, and accepting of their children.

Conflicts are defined as tensions, arguments, or behavior in which characters are contending one with another.

STATEMENT OF ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made prior to the study:

1. There would be more incidence of hostile/uninvolved or neutral parents than sympathetic/involved parents.

2. In the majority of the literature, siblings would have a low profile: they would either be absent or have little interaction with the protagonist.

3. Male protagonists would have more major intrafamily conflicts than female protagonists.

4. The majority of the novels would use a single-parent family structure.

5. Family relationships would change during the course of the book.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Selection of Young Adult Novels

A content analysis was conducted on a random sample of young adult realistic fiction listed on the American Library Association's Best Lists for the years 1987 to 1991. Five criteria was used in the selection of the literature:

1. Only realistic fiction was used.

2. The protaganist had to be between the ages of 13 and 18 during the major portion of the story.

3. Only literature on the American Library Association's Best Lists for the years 1987 to 1991 was used.

4. Only those books that had family relationships which somehow influenced the protagonist were used.

5. Books selected had to be available in the Mansfield-Richland County Public Library system.

To insure a random sample, the following methods were used: A list was created using all books on the Best Books for Young Adults and Recommended Books for the Reluctant Reader lists. Books selected to go on this list met the criteria outlined above. Each title was was written on a piece of paper and put in a hat. From the hat, twenty titles were chosen for content analysis.

Treatment of the Information

The following information was gathered:

1. What are the major decisions and problems facing the teen protagonist in each novel and what part do immediate family members play in those decisions and problems?

2. What are the major intrafamily conflicts? These are categorized as follows: conflict with parents, conflict or jealousy of siblings, embarrassment because of family members who deviate from the norm, conflict with parent's religious beliefs, contemplating running away or committing suicide, conflict due to marriage or pregnancy, conflict with parents due to differing moral standards.

3. How are the parents categorized? The following categories are used: neutral, sympathetic/involved, or hostile/uninvolved.

4. Is the protagonist in a single-parent home or a two-parent home?

5. Does the gender of the protagonist influence family relationships?

6. Do family relationships evolve in the novel, and if so, how are the family relationships portrayed at the conclusion of the story?

Data Analysis

For each novel, a description is given of the protagonist and the major problems and decisions he faces. A description is also given of the protagonist's immediate family members and their positive or negative relationships to him. Conflicts with family members are categorized and tabulated in a frequency chart. A frequency chart is also given classifying fathers and mothers by their interaction with the protagonist: sympathetic/involved, neutral, or hostile/uninvolved. This is listed by protagonist's gender and by family structure. Discussion is then given on the findings, comparing books and families.

Beginning alphabetically by title, a content analysis is given for each novel. This is followed by a discussion on the cumulative findings as shown in the frequency charts.

Alice by Sara Flanigan

Ellie Perkins lives with her widowed father and a brother in the Georgia Mountains in the 1940's. She and her brother are very close--best friends, in that they communicate with one another about everything and rely on each other. Ever since their mother died, their father has consoled himself with liquor, and when he drinks, he is dangerous. One night he took a rifle to the dog and came close to shooting Ellie also. He would have done so if he had not passed out first. It reached a point where the children and their relatives thought it might be best for them to leave the father and live elsewhere. The children were reluctant to leave him, because they felt he really needed them and because when he wasn't drunk, he was very loving. As the story unfolds, the father does overcome his alcoholism and it is largely due to the events that transpire with Alice.

Alice has been severely abused by her parents. She has been kept for years in a filthy shed and fed nothing much better than dog food. She has epilepsy, is hard of hearing and her parents think she is "teched by the devil." Ellie and Sam hear her animal-like cries and soon take it upon themselves to help her. Because of their caring and compassion many people become involved in trying to help

Alice. Even their father is touched by his children's efforts and offers to take Alice into his home and see that she receive proper help and education. This mission of helping Alice creates a strong family unity and purpose and helps Ellie's father remain sober.

1. Female protagonist
2. Single-parent family
3. Conflict with parent over rules. At first Ellie's father forbids his children to go to Alice's place because Alice's father is so dangerous, but the children defy the rules.
4. Conflict due to death in the family. Ellie's mother passes away and her father turns to alcohol which then causes sadness, conflict and danger for the children.
5. The children do think about running away to protect themselves from their father's alcoholic binges.
6. Father is categorized as sympathetic and involved because he certainly loves his children and overcomes his drinking problems to aid the children in their service to Alice.

Chinese Handcuffs by Chris Crutcher

Dillon is a gifted sixteen year old athlete, but does not compete in the school program, much to to disgust of Mr. Caldwell, the High School principal. Dillon enjoys provoking Caldwell and manages to skip school at least once per week. But Dillon must deal with the suicide of his older brother, Preston. Preston was involved in drugs and motorcycle gangs. Throughout the story, Dillon sorts through his emotions by writing letters to Preston. At first, he explains to Preston, that he writes because there is no one else who will listen. His father has enough to worry about, and his mother and sister are no longer around. They moved out when the drug problems started with

Preston. Eventually, through the story, he discovers his father will listen and does want to talk with him. His father proves trustworthy and supportive when a new crisis erupts. Dillon's girlfriend confesses that she is being sexually abused by her father. Dillon is able to talk to his father about this and help her resolve the situation.

1. Male protagonist
2. Single-parent family
3. Conflict due to death of a sibling--Preston's suicide.
4. Embarrassment because of family member who deviates from the norm. Preston's drug use and companionship with undesirable people bring Dillon much embarrassment.
5. Family does break up due to Preston's drug use.
6. Conflict with sibling. Before Preston killed himself, there were many conflicts between brothers.
7. Father is characterized as sympathetic and involved because he is warm and supportive of Dillion.
8. Mother is characterized as neutral because she does not enter into the story in any significant way.

Denny's Tapes by Carolyn Meyer

Denny's mother is white and his natural father is black. Denny's parents found they could not cope with the prejudice and rejection from family members and others, so their marriage did not last. His father moved to San Francisco when Denny was still a baby and they never got to know each other. Denny's mother remarried a white doctor who had also been divorced and the family adjusted fairly well.

The story actually begins as Denny is dictating his feelings onto a tape recorder as he leaves home to drive across the country. His

step-father forced him to leave when Denny became intimately involved with the doctor's daughter soon after she moved in with their family. There is an explosive confrontation with his parents and he finds himself enroute to California to find not only his natural father, but his own identity. He stops along the way to become reacquainted with both his maternal and paternal grandparents and at each place he finds love and acceptance. The story ends as Denny arrives at his father's apartment, having realized that what he really wants is to be a musician like his natural father. His grandmothers helped Denny realize he had the talent to do just that. Though his father is not home when Denny arrives, he decides to stay, feeling hopeful about his future.

1. Male protagonist
2. Two-parent family
3. Conflict over rules. Denny's involvement with his step-sister defies all social rules, not to mention his parents'
4. Mother is sympathetic and involved during most of the story.
5. His natural father is uninvolved and his step-father is hostile. (This will only be counted once)
6. Conflict due to differing moral standards.
7. Leaves home.

<u>Don't Blame the Music</u> by Caroline B. Cooney

Susan Hall's sister, Ashley, is an embarrassment to the family. She is a 25 year old failed rock singer whose only pleasure is to create constant havoc and turmoil within the family. She is the

complete opposite of obedient, conservative Susan, and is the object of gossip and loathing. Susan is a 17 year old high school senior who is a good student, on the high school year book committee, and who gets along very well with her parents. Her father is a warm and loving man and her mother is a full-time homemaker who was named volunteer of the year.

Life and relationships were very harmonious until Ashley returned home. Now the household is in constant upheaval with her volatile and destructive outbursts. She defaces property, shouts insults, and even threatens bodily harm. On one occasion Susan narrowly escapes being set on fire by her sister. It is at this point Ashley collapses and realizes she needs professional help. She allows her parents to commit her to an institution. The story ends with family relationships still intact and hope for the future for Ashley.

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family
3. Conflict because of sibling.
4. Embarrassment because of family member who deviates from the norm.
5. Parents are sympathetic and involved.

Family Reunion by Caroline Cooney

Shelley is a fourteen year old whose mixed emotions regarding her family surface when she attends a family reunion. Her mother abandoned the family to run away with a French man and now lives in Paris uninterested in having the children come for more than a short

stay. Shelley's father is now on his third marriage and this is requiring adjustments for everyone in the family. Shelley is not looking forward to the reunion, which is being organized by her "perfect" and snobbish relatives, especially since they pity Shelley for her "unstable" family life.

Shelley has buried her emotions about her parents, but begins the healing process when she realizes her relatives' family is not perfect either. She enjoys her cousin, and gains a sympathy for her aunt and uncle when she discovers their son has left the family for drugs and a wild life style. Perhaps her family isn't so bad, after all. Shelley compares her life to a windshield that is hit by a stone. At first there is just a hole, and then shattering lines spread throughout the glass. She felt her life and her family shattered in the same way. But during the summer she gains new insights into the fine and loving man her father is and grows in forgiveness for her mother. She decides she will go visit her mother in France to mend the relationship.

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family : she lives with father and step-mother.
3. No major conflict with siblings.
4. Embarrassment because of family members.
5. Breakup of parents during course of story due to divorce.
6. Conflict due to marriage.
7. Father--sympathatic/involved; Mother hostile/uninvolved.

Ferris Beach by Jill McCorkle

Kate Burns lives in a stable, loving home with a father who is a math teacher and a mother who retired from teaching to be a full-

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time homemaker. Kate is an only child and gets along very well with her parents. Her father is a loving man with a terrific sense of humor. Her mother is very conservative and does not laugh enough. Conflict first enters the story when her elusive and mysterious cousin comes and goes from their home, each time with a different man in her life. Kate's parents raised Angela from the time she was a baby, but one day as a sixteen year old, Angela ran way without a word to marry a boy she barely knew. This deeply hurt Kate's parents and each of Angela's comings and going added to their hurt. Kate had not been born until around the time Angela ran away, and so she imagined that Angela could be her natural mother.

The story is filled with tragedy--first the abandonment and then subsequent death of Kate's best friend's mother; second, the rape of a schoolmate by other schoolmates and Kate's witnessing of the entire event. The rapist is murdered and set on fire and the fire destroys several houses in their area, including her boyfriend's. The third major tragedy is the unexpected death of her father toward the end of the story.

The death of her father brings on strong conflicts between Kate and her mother. Kate hopes for more love and support from her mother, and when her mother disappoints those needs, Kate turns to her boyfriend. During this vulnerable time she becomes sexually involved with her boyfriend and one day her mother happens to walk in the room to discover their nakedness. The explosive confrontation between Kate and her mother result in Kate's exile to Angela's home. Kate's mother feels this whole experience is a repeat of her earlier episodes

with Angela. The story ends, however, with Kate and her mother reuniting and solving their problems.

1. Female protagonist
2. 2-parent family until end of the story.
3. Conflict with parents over rules.
4. Conflict due to death in the family.
5. Runs away for a time.
6. Conflict with parents due to differing moral standard.
7. Parents sympathetic and involved through most of story.

A Kindness by Cynthia Rylant

A Kindness is a story with a different slant for young adults. Instead of the teenager becoming pregnant out of wedlock, it is the mother in the story who becomes pregnant. The fifteen year old son Chip, is embarrassed, shocked, and disappointed. He assumes his mother will get an abortion, but she decides to keep this baby, though the father will not be part of its life.

Chip's formerly harmonious relationship with his mother becomes somewhat tense as they both deal with the emotions of this pregnancy. All the emotions explode in one confrontation where Chip discloses the fact that he doesn't feel he can take care of this baby. It's enough to just take care of his mother. His mother is shocked that he has always felt responsible for her happiness. This revelation is the key which helps to restore their relationship.

When the baby is finally born, Chip becomes so protective and attached to her, that he will not allow the father to enter the

picture for fear he will claim some "ownership" rights. The father is a married man, and a long-time friend of his mother's. but in a telephone conversation he lets this man know he has no place in their lives.

1. Male protagonist
2. Single-parent family.
3. Conflict due to pregnancy.
4. Mother sympathetic and involved. Father neutral.

The Last April Dancers by Jean Thesman

Sixteen year old Catherine St. John is becoming increasingly concerned about her father. He seems confused, hums and talks to himself, cries easily when stressed, and he often shakes and falls. He has also been the cause of frequent embarrassment around her friends. Her mother, a real estate agent is cold and aloof and gone most of the time, but when she is home, she is neurotic about keeping the house spotlessly clean. She will not allow Cat to help do household chores because she can do them better herself. She tells Cat not to worry about the father, that he is just tired and upset over losing his job. This communication is just about the only consoling thing her mother says throughout the story.

The one bright light in Cat's life is her budding romance with Cameron, the boy next door. They can see each other's rooms from their windows and at night they talk on the phone to each other and sometimes sneak out the windows to spend time together. Cat's father

is supportive of their relationship and always suggests that they go with him to a family farm, where they can spend time alone.

On Cat's sixteenth birthday, her father was to take her to get her driver's license, but he never picked her up from school. She ends up calling Cameron to take her and when she gets home she storms into the house and yells at her father and accuses him of not caring about her. Before he can even respond she storms back out of the house and drives off with Cameron for a picnic in the orchard. It is a romantic day and they dance together committing themselves to each other. As the dark unfolds, Cat suddenly becomes frightened but doesn't understand why. They leave the orchard and come upon a car--her father's car. They soon learn that he has jumped off the bridge to his death.

Cat experiences many emotions, not the least of which is guilt--feeling that her angry words were somehow responsible for her father's suicide. Cat's mother does nothing to comfort her, but sends her away to live with an aunt. Her mother doesn't want to cope with Cat and she also wants to discourage the romance with Cameron. The story ends on a happy note, however. Cat does return to live with her mother and the future relationship with her mother and with Cameron look hopeful.

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family during most of the story.
3. Embarrassment because of family member who deviates from norm.
4. Breakup of parents during story due to death.
5. Conflict with mother over rules
6. Father: sympathetic/involved; Mother: hostile/uninvolved.

Looking for Home by Jean Ferris

Seventeen year old Daphne Blake lives in a home ruled by a volatile and violent father. He once broke two of her ribs, and her mother often came to the breakfast table with her face full of fresh bruises. No one could ever predict when her father would become violent. Daphne's mother loves her and is sympathetic, but is simply immobilized by fear of her husband.

When Daphne becomes pregnant after one night with someone she hoped would give her the love she so needed, she decides she will never trust anyone again. She secretly leaves home when her parents are away and ventures out on her own. She finds a room at the YWCA and finds a job at a diner. One day, after feeling lonely for her family, she calls home. Her mother answers, but the phone is ripped from her hands, and the father informs Daphne in no uncertain terms that she is no longer welcome at home.

The owner and cook at the diner take a genuine interest in Daphne and "adopt" her. She also becomes acquainted with a regular customer who invites her to come live in her house until the baby comes. However, when the baby does arrive, her friends encourage her not to give the baby up for adoption, but to keep it, and to continue living with this lady. These people become her longed for family. No reconciliation ever takes place with her natural family.

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family
3. Contemplates running away--and does.
4. Conflict due to pregnancy.

5. Conflict with parents due to differing moral standards.
6. Father: hostile/uninvolved; Mother: sympathetic/involved.

Newfound by Jim Wayne Miller

Robert Wells lives with his family on his paternal grandparents' tobacco farm in Appalachia. The story begins when Robert is ten and the trouble between his parents explodes. Robert's mother is constantly criticizing and belittling his father. But his father is a schemer and dreamer and flits from one job or scheme to another. There are money problems and inlaw problems. By the time Robert turns thirteen, his parents are divorced.

Robert's maternal grandparents also live in a house on the same farm. After the divorce, Robert and his family move in with them. Robert's mother seems more like a sister than a mother. She goes to school, working for her high school diploma and she also works at a factory. After work, she does her homework along with the children. Robert's father comes around to see the children regularly, but each time has a new job or scheme.

The majority of the story tells of Robert's teenage experiences. It is rich in the flavor of Appalachian life, but there is really no plot, simply significant events in his life. The major conflicts in the book are between the adults.

1. Male protagonist
2. Single-parent family
3. Breakup of family due to divorce.
4. Parents are sympathetic/involved.

The Preacher's Boy by Terry Pringle

Michael Page and his Baptist preacher father seem to find communication difficult. Michael is rebellious and his father is strict and unyielding. Add to this conflict the town gossipers' tattle-tale reports, and Michael's life seems to be nothing more than crime and punishment.

Michael has difficulty accepting the doctrines taught by the Baptists and he has trouble developing the relationship with God he feels he should. Michael's father feels relieved when his son goes to college because he is tired of the constant conflicts. But the major conflict is yet to come. Michael's relationship with his girlfriend becomes sexual and he moves in with her. His father learns that his son is "living in sin" and goes to see for himself. When Michael opens the door to see the look of devastation on his father's face, Michael promises to move back into the dorms.

As the story moves to a close, Michael decides to be totally honest with his father about his feelings of disbelief about the Bible and Baptist teachings. His father reaffirms to his son his unconditional love regardless of their conflicting beliefs. They both claim responsibility for failure of their past relationship and speak words of love for the first time.

1. Male protagonist
2. Two-parent family.
3. Conflict over rules.
4. Embarrassment (on the father's part) because of family member who deviates from the norm.

5. Conflict with parent's religious beliefs.
6. Conflict with parents due to differing moral standards.
7. Father is perceived as hostile; Mother is sympathetic.

Probably Still Nick Swansen by Virginia Euwer Wolff

Nick is a special education student with many problems, one of the major ones being lack of self-esteem. It really began with the drowning of his sister Dianne, and dreams of the accident still haunt him. They were swimming together when she drowned. Attempts by his father to breathe life into her failed, and Nick feels responsible.

Another major factor in his lack of self-esteem has to do with being stood up at the prom. He had worked very hard at the greenhouse to pay for the tickets, for the corsage, and for a boat ride after the prom. He had practiced dancing every day after school. But his date didn't show. While he was waiting at the dance for her, he overheard two fathers talking about the special education class as a bunch of "droolers." This added to his night of grief. Because of his embarrassment at being stood up, he skips school (and his parents let him) but this only brings more trouble. One day Nick gets drunk and another day he wrecks his parents' car taking the dog to the vet. It is only when Nick finally learns the real reason his date didn't come to the prom that he begins to feel better about himself. His parents are loving and supportive during the entire story, but Nick's self-esteem really hinges on what his peers think of him.

1. Male protagonist
2. Two-parent family.

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3. Conflict due to death or loss of sibling.
4. Parents are sympathetic and involved.

Second Brother by David Guy

Henry Wilder lives in a fairly happy and loving family. His father is a specialist in twentieth-century American literature--a full professor and writer. His mother is a full-time homemaker with many talents and who loves to be the center of attention. He also has a sister and two brothers. The brother most important to the story is his oldest brother, Bennett. Henry walks in his brother's shadow. Bennett is a superb student and athlete, admired by teachers and students. Henry finds it difficult to follow his brother. While Bennett is thin and physically fit, Henry is fat.

One day, Henry's best friend Sam bullies him into beginning an exercise regime and diet. This challenge becomes a life-long pursuit for Henry and he does become fit and trim. Henry joins the track team (like his brother) and joins the school newspaper and literary magazine (like his brother). He is successful at all of these endeavors, but finds it difficult to constantly be compared to his brother. At one point Henry laments that he always wished for a different kind of brother--one in whom he could confide, but instead he is always in competition with Bennett.

Another major part of the book is Henry's friendship with Sam and Cindy. These three are partners in crime--smoking and drinking, though Henry seems to be more conservative than his two friends. When Henry's relationship with Sam comes to a stormy end, his family is the

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stabilizing force that helps Henry follow a more productive course.

1. Male protagonist
2. Two-parent family
3. Conflict or jealousy of sibling
4. Embarrassment because of family member who deviates from the norm.
5. Parents sympathetic/involved.

Send No Blessings by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Beth is fifteen and the oldest of eight children living with her parents in a double wide trailer in West Virginia. She is an average student in most subjects, but does exceptionally well in typing. She hopes to make something of herself--not grow up to live in the same situation as her parents--too many children, not enough money.

Her father constantly belittles her. One time when she was getting ready for a date, he told her how ugly she was and he couldn't understand how anyone would ask her on a date. He also thinks she is wasting her time in high school and should quit school and work in the diner.

Beth's mother is sympathetic and helpful to Beth, but when the mother becomes pregnant again (another "blessing") Beth must assume the major responsibilities of running the household. She hardly has time to complete her homework or finish the work she does for a local florist. All of the demands at home hinder her grades, but her father suggests she is not bright enough to get good grades.

When a young man enters her life and she becomes emotionally

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involved with him, she begins to fear that her dreams may never come true. When her boyfriend proposes, she must decide between love, thus escaping an unhappy home situation, or follow her dreams to get an education and make something of herself. As the story closes, Beth wins a scholarship for school and comes to understand that her father has been afraid of losing her all along--that is why, he explains, he has treated her so poorly.

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family
3. Embarrassment because of family members who deviate from norm
4. Conflict due to pregnancy.
5. Father: hostile/uninvolved; Mother: sympathetic/involved.

<u>So Much To Tell You</u> by John Marsden

Marina is a fifteen year old Australian girl with a tragic past. In a fit of anger, her father sought revenge on his adulterous wife. He threw acid in the face of the person who stepped from the driver's side of the car. He thought it was his wife, but instead, it was his daughter. Marina's father was sentenced to prison, her mother ran off with her lover, and Marina was sentenced to many months in a hospital. When she was finally able to be released from the hospital, her mother didn't want her and sent her to a boarding school.

The story unfolds as Marina writes in her journal. She speaks to no one and shrinks from attention. She will allow no one to get close. It is only after time and small kindnesses shown her, that she finally agrees to go for an extended visit to the home of one of her

classmates. She realizes her friend lives near the town where her father is incarcerated. Marina arranges to meet her father and on that hopeful day, it is with a great deal of emotion that they embrace and Marina breaks her silence with the words: "I've got so much to tell you."

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family
3. Break-up in family due to divorce.
4. Contemplates suicide.
5. Mother: hostile/uninvolved; Father: hostile/uninvolved until the end of the story.

The Summer of Sassy Jo by J. P. Reading

Sara Jo Jacoby is fourteen when she goes to live with her mother. Her mother was an alcoholic who abandoned the family when Sara was only five. Now, after all these years, Sara was sent to spend the summer with her aunt. Her father had just died of cancer and her aunt couldn't cope with Sara's "incorrigible" behavior. Sara's mother had married a doctor and had another child, Lily, who was just a toddler.

When Sara, or Sassy Jo, as she is called, first arrives at her mother's home, she is filled with anger, bitterness and a determination to avoid all closeness or attachment to this family. She avoids conversation, is hard to get along with, and resists warmth. But she slowly lowers her defenses and allows some feelings to develop.

Sassy's roller coaster emotions are complicated not only by her initial bitterness, but because of her changing body and hormones.

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During one point in the story Sassy runs away. but this gives her time to reflect on just how much this new family means to her and how much she wants to stay with them permanently.

1. Female protagonist
2. Two-parent family.
3. Conflict with parents over rules.
4. Contemplates and does run away.
5. Conflict in beginning of story due to death of her father.
6. Parents sympathetic and involved.

<u>This Stranger, My Father</u> by Robert Hawks

Fifteen year old Patty is attending high school one morning when she is taken into custody of the authorities, put in a foster home, and told her father is an escaped convict who sold secrets to the Russians. Her mother is dead and she has no other family to turn to--even her friends now can't be trusted. She runs away from the foster home and meets her father at a special place. They spend most of the time running--not only from the authorities, but others who were seeking to kill them.

Patty's father is suddenly a stranger to her. She no longer sees him as her loving father. but a calculating and mysterious criminal. They steal cars and commit other crimes for self-preservation. Her life is totally disrupted--they can't stay any place too long for fear of being discovered. Her father goes off and leaves her for hours at a time and she is left alone in the motel room to worry.

One day she goes for a walk, and she meets a nice looking guy on a motorcycle. She becomes interested in him and he in her, and they meet a few times. He becomes her salvation when she and her father are found. Patty and her father become separated but she finds her father's suitcase with $88,000, with which she can start a new life. She hopes that in a year she will again meet her father at a secret location.

1. Female protagonist
2. Single-parent family.
3. Conflict with parent over moral standards (not sexual)
4. Contemplates running away from father
5. Father is sympathetic and involved.

The Trouble With Mothers by Margery Facklam

Luke Troy is a fourteen year old boy with a big problem. His mother, a high school teacher wrote a book called The Passionate Pirate, which becomes the object of a censorship crusade. A stranger to the community, Major Madison comes to town as part of a "Clean Up America" campaign, and holds rallies and public meetings to alert the community to "filth in print." Madison even instigates a book burning rally. Luke must decide how he personally stands on his mother's book, which lately seems to be a constant source of embarrass ment.

This crisis affects him in school and in his swim meets. He had hoped to win and beat his teammate's records, but he can't forget nor forgive remarks made about his mother and the book. When Luke finally

reads the book from cover to cover, and not just the steamy part that all the guys in the locker room snicker about, he realizes the worth of the book and supports his mother.

1. Male protagonist
2. Single-parent family.
3. Embarrassment because of family member who deviates from norm
4. Conflict with parents over rules (mostly as a result of his dilemma over the book)
5. Mother sympathetic and involved.

Where the Kissing Never Stops by Ron Koertge

Seventeen year old Walker lives alone with his widowed mother. His father was killed by a car while he was jogging. His mother, much to his embarrassment takes a job as a stripper at a sleezy club. This is a source of much conflict in their relationship and he can't bring himself to tell his girlfriend the truth about his mother. He feels he will be the laughing stock of the high school.

One night he is determined to go to the club to watch his mother perform, and he drinks to give himself courage to go. But he and his friends are kicked out before he sees his mother. He makes a second attempt later and this time he does watch her perform and realizes it is not nearly as distasteful as he thought it would be.

His mother lives by a double standard. She warns him about sex, yet does not hide her sexual relationships with men. She warns him about drinking, yet encourages him to join her when she drinks. This causes conflict in their relationship.

1. Male protagonist
2. Single-parent family
3. Embarrassment because of family member who deviates from norm
4. Breakup of parents due to death of father
5. Conflict with parent due to differing moral standard
6. Conflict over rules
7. Mother--sympathetic and involved

The Year Without Michael by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Life in the Chapman family is changed forever when fourteen-year old Michael never returns home from a softball game with friends. Despite efforts of police and private investigators, Michael is never found. No one is sure whether he ran away or met with foul play.

Jody is the sixteen year old protagonist of the story and tries to be the glue to hold the family together. Jody's parents are so overcome by their own grief, they do not offer much comfort or support to anyone else. Jody's mother turns all of her anger toward the youngest daughter, Kay and eventually sends Kay away to live with a grandparent for awhile.

Jody secretly goes in search of Michael on her own, but soon realizes it is a lost cause, and too dangerous to be in New York City alone. She goes into a church and talks to Reverend Richards, who helps her realize it is not her responsibility to salvage the family. She returns home to find her parents worried sick about her, and they resolve to strengthen the family relationships with those family members who are still left.

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1. Female protagonist

2. Two-parent family

3. Conflict due to death or loss of sibling

4. Parents are coded as sympathetic/involved from the protagonist's viewpoint only.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The majority of parents in the sample are sympathetic/involved. Out of 20 books, there are a total of 36 parents. Of those parents, 72% (26) are sympathetic/involved. Twenty-two percent (8) are hostile/uninvolved. Six percent (2) parents are neutral in the story. In the 9 books involving a male protagonist, there are no hostile/uninvolved mothers, but 2 hostile/uninvolved fathers. In the 11 books involving a female protagonist, there are an equal number of hostile/uninvolved fathers and mothers, for a total of 6 parents falling in this category.

It is interesting to note that of the eight parents who were perceived by the protagonist as hostile/uninvolved, conflicts with six of those parents resolve in such a way, that by the end of the book, the relationship between protagonist and parent is much more positive and hopeful. For example, in the book Send No Blessings the father constantly belittles and berates Beth, calling her ugly and stupid, telling her she might as well quit school and work in the diner. In the end of the story when Beth wins a scholarship and is going off to school, her father confesses that he has wronged her and doesn't want her to leave home thinking he doesn't care about her. He admits that his fear of losing her caused him to act the way he did, and that he knew she would make something of herself.

In the book, The Preacher's Son, father and son embrace and both take the responsibility for a disastrous relationship. The father expresses his unconditional love and the son is honest with his father

for the first time, expressing his feelings about religion and his love for his father.

Denny, the protagonist in Denny's Tapes, while on the road and away from home, gains an appreciation for his parents and at times wishes to be home. He is hopeful about building his relationship with his natural father and intends to stay in California to do just that. The protagonists in Family Reunion and The Last April Dancers are, by the end of the book, hopeful about developing their relationships with their mothers. In So Much to Tell You, Marina goes to visit her father in prison, the father who threw acid on her and sentenced her to a life of disfigurement. The father's repentance and emotion are evident as he and his daughter embrace, and she speaks for the first time since that fateful night.

Thirteen of the 20 books include two-parent families. Seven of the the 20 include a single-parent family. There are no hostile/uninvolved parents in the single-parent families, but there are 8 in the two-parent families, with more fathers as the hostile/uninvolved parent. More mothers than fathers are sympathetic/involved in two-parent families, while there are an equal number of sympathetic/involved mothers and fathers in single-parent families.

Nine different types of conflict within families are analyzed. The most frequent types of conflict portrayed in the novels are first, the breakup of the family due to divorce, separation, or death and second, embarrassment because of family members who deviated from the norm. Five books include conflict triggered by the death of a

parent: Alice, Ferris Beach, The Last April Dancers, The Summer of Sassy Jo, and Where the Kissing Never Stops.

The death of the father comes toward the end of the story in Ferris Beach and The Last April Dancers, and the conflict for the protagonist is not only dealing with the loss itself, but also the living parent's reaction to the death. In Alice, and Where the Kissing Never Stops, the death of the parent is explained early in the story and the protagonist's conflict in the story is not so much the loss itself as the parent's poor decisions resulting from the spouse's death. Ellie's father in Alice turns to liquor, and Walker's mother in Where the Kissing Never Stops becomes a stripper. In The Summer of Sassy Jo, Sassy is forced by the death of her father to go live with her natural mother who abandoned her many years earlier.

Divorce is a problem for families in Chinese Handcuffs, Family Reunion, Newfound, and So Much To Tell You. Divorce is explained early in the story in all four books. In Chinese Handcuffs, divorce is triggered by the drug abuse of Dillon's brother. In Family Reunion, divorce is warranted after Shelly's mother abandoned the family for a French man and moved to Paris. Financial problems, in-law problems and the scheming and dreaming of the father contribute to the break up of the family in Newfound. In an attempt at revenge on his adulterous wife, the father in So Much to Tell You, throws acid on the figure stepping out of the car one night. The figure is his daughter instead of the wife and the family is destroyed. The father goes to prison and the mother remarries.

Embarrassment because of family members who deviate from the norm is also a major source of conflict. Nine books contain this element in the story. Male characters in Where the Kissing Never Stops and The Trouble With Mothers are embarrassed by their mothers. The father's mental illness is the source of embarrassment for Cat in The Last April Dancers. Protagonists are embarrassed by siblings in Second Brother, Chinese Handcuffs, and Don't Blame the Music. In Send No Blessings and Family Reunion, protagonists are embarrassed by their family and their family's circumstances. It is the father in The Preacher's Son who is embarrassed by his rebellious and non-conforming son. Embarrassment because of family members is the most frequent type of conflict experienced by male protagonists.

Conflict over rules was the next most frequent source of conflict in the sample. Eight of the 20 books portray this and an equal number of male and female protagonists are involved. Problems with rules are found in Alice, Denny's Tapes, Ferris Beach, The Preacher's Boy, The Summer of Sassy Jo, The Trouble with Mothers, Where the Kissing Never Stops, and The Last April Dancers.

Six novels include a protagonist who either thinks about running away or committing suicide. Suicide is an option in only one book--So Much to Tell You. Marina's disfigurement causes her to consider whether or not life is still worth living. Protagonists in Ferris Beach and The Summer of Sassy Jo do run away from home for a short time, but Daphne in Looking for Home runs away because of her pregnancy, and is told by her father never to return. Running away is considered, but never done in This Stranger, My Father and Alice.

Six novels include conflicts between teens and parents over differing moral standards. Premarital sexual activity triggers conflict between parent and teen in Denny's Tapes, Ferris Beach, Looking for Home, and The Preacher's Boy. The son is ashamed of his mother's decision to become a stripper in Where the Kissing Never Stops. Dishonest and illegal activities by her father cause moral conflict for Patty in This Stranger, My Father.

Four novels include conflict due to pregnancy or marriage. Teens in A Kindness and Send No Blessings are distraught at the news of their mothers' pregnancies. Both Chip and Beth feel the pregnancies will result in more responsibility and work for them, and this causes contention. Daphne's pregnancy in Looking for Home forces her to leave home, results in the rejection by her father, and prompts her search for a new life. The remarriage of the father in Family Reunion forces many emotional adjustments for Shelley.

Three novels deal with the death or loss of a sibling. In The Year Without Michael, the family must face agonizing emotions because of the disappearance of Michael. Nick feels the guilt of his sister's drowning in Probably Still Nick Swanson. The major conflict in the story, Chinese Handcuffs, is Dillon's struggle for emotional recovery after the suicide of his brother.

Sibling conflict or jealousy is characterized in three novels. In Second Brother, Henry follows in the intimidating footsteps of his older and talented brother. Chinese Handcuffs and Don't Blame the Music both portray siblings who are dangerous, moody and wayward.

Conflict because of differing religious beliefs are characterized in only one novel, The Preacher's Boy. The son is rebellious and wayward and can never reconcile his own religious beliefs and doubts with his father's. His father's expectations are not fulfilled and this triggers more punishment for the son.

There are more family conflicts in novels with female protagonists than with male protagonists. There are 11 novels with female protagonists who, combined, have 28 conflicts. Of the 9 novels with male protagonists, there are 21 conflicts.

Protagonists have sibling relationships in eleven novels, but siblings only have major roles in six of these: Chinese Handcuffs, The Year Without Michael, Don't Blame the Music, Alice, Second Brother, and Denny's Tapes. In nine of the twenty novels, the protagonist is an only child.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the assumptions made prior to this study have proved to be false. Assumption #1 suggested there would be more incidence of hostile/uninvolved parents than sympathetic/involved. Seventy-two percent of the parents were characterized as sympathetic and involved. Twenty-two percent of the parents were portrayed as hostile/ uninvolved, but by the end of the story most of those parents are perceived as caring.

Assumption #2 suggested siblings would have a low profile with little or no interaction with the protagonist. There were more novels featuring sibling relationships than not, but siblings in only six of these had major impact on the protagonist. Sibling relationships in the other five novels had a low profile. Nine of the twenty protagonists were an only child. This finding suggests that assumption #2 is true.

Assumption #3 suggested that male protagonists would would have more major family conflicts than female protagonists. This proved to be false. Female characters experienced more incidence of family conflict, with the majority of conflicts being the breakup of the family due to divorce or death, and more thought by the character of suicide or running away from home.

Assumption #4 proposed that the majority of the novels would use more single-parent families. This assumption proved false. There were thirteen two-parent families and only seven single-parent families.

Finally, assumption #5 suggested that family relationships would evolve during the course of the novel, and this proved to be true in all but one book, Probably Still Nick Swansen. Relationships in this novel were positive and supportive throughout the story. All but one of the other nineteen novels ended with improved relationships. Family relationships in Looking For Home did not end in a positive way.

In conclusion, then, this study shows a trend to portray family relationships in a more positive way than did the novels that were analyzed by researchers in the past. Nilsen and Donelson's claim that it is a myth that young adult novels are anti-parent certainly is true in this study. It is possible that this study's sample, using only the best young adult literature may have resulted in different findings than would have resulted if other books had been used. Further research could analyze a larger sampling of young adult literature including novels not on the best lists.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

TEEN/PARENT INTERACTION
FREQUENCY TABLE

Gender of Protagonist		Sympathetic/Involved Mother	Sympathetic/Involved Father	Neutral M	Neutral F	Hostile/Uninvolved Mother	Hostile/Uninvolved Father
Male	9	8	4	1	1	0	2
Female	11	6	8	0	0	3	3
TOTALS	20	14	12	1	1	3	5
By Family Structure							
2-Parent	13	10	8	0	0	3	5
1-Parent	7	4	4	1	1	0	0
TOTALS	20	14	12	1	1	3	5

APPENDIX 2

CATEGORIES OF CONFLICT
FREQUENCY TABLE

CATEGORIES OF CONFLICT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Conflict with parents over rules	4	4	8
Conflict or jealousy of siblings	2	1	3
Embarrassment because of family members who deviate from the norm	5	4	9
Breakup of parents during the course of the story due to divorce, separation, or death	3	6	9
Conflict due to death or loss of sibling	2	1	3
Conflict with parent's religious beliefs	1	0	1
Contemplating running away or committing suicide	0	6	6
Conflict due to marriage or pregnancy	1	3	4
Conflict with parents due to differing moral standards	3	3	6

APPENDIX 3

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[16] Kurth, p. 28

[17] Burner, p. 43.

[18] Alleen Pace and Ken Donelson. "The New Realism Comes of Age," Journal of Youth Services in Libraries 1 (Spring 1988) pp. 275-282.

[19] Atkinson, pp. 310-320.

[20] Ibid. pp. 311-313.

[21] Ibid. p. 317.

[22] Ibid. p. 317.

[23] Ibid. p. 319.

[24] Ibid. p. 319.

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